



Business League for Massage Therapy & Bodywork (BLMTB)

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Legislative Update

#034 May 7, 2009

Greetings!

The Massage Therapy Licensing bill is now law!

Due to some delays in the process, HB662, a bill to license massage therapy, was not signed until Tuesday, May 5, 2009.

We thought it would be signed on April 27, but the news that it wouldn't be signed on that day didn't surface until the last minute. However, Rep. Arntzen coordinated a meeting for that same day with Patti Keebler, appointments coordinator for the Governor's Office and Marilyn Kelly-Clark, the unit supervisor for the Health Care Licensing Bureau.

This meeting was held to answer questions and provide information concerning the next steps.

The two most important things to come out of that meeting were:

1. Appointments to the Board of Massage Therapy will be made within a few weeks. If you are interested in applying (or would like to make a recommendation for a board member) do so NOW. They hope to have the board appointed by late May.

2. To ensure that you get all important information concerning Licensing, the Board, and Board meetings, sign up for the "Interested Parties List" NOW.

More Information on these two items is below!!

We know that some of you are concerned about what happens next, and are concerned about the Board abusing its power. The best way to ensure that doesn't happen is to apply yourself or recommend someone to the board (info how to do that is below)! We always encourage public participation in the process, rather than leaving it to others to do it for you. So, get involved!!

Future newsletters will be used to explain the bill and pass along information about the process, so stay tuned.

In other news, the AMTA-MT chapter held a celebratory dinner on May 2nd. Awards of recognition were given out to those who helped with the effort. Deborah Kimmet, representing the BLMTB, attended on our behalf. We all hope that now that the effort toward licensing has ended, that this will usher in a new era of cooperation and unity in the profession as we move forward!

Happy Reading!

The BLMTB Board of Directors



BLMTB Board of Directors Co-Director, Deborah Kimmet (Rear left) with Governor Schwietzer at the bill signing.
Front: Celeste Rivers (MTGRC), The Governor, Rachel Romanelli (AMTA). Rear: Deborah, Claudia Fife (AMTA), Julie Solberg (AMTA)

If you like the info that you get from the BLMTB consider becoming a member or making a donation. While we provide all of our info for free, it does cost us something to keep the website going and to provide information to the general public. For example, we'll be doing a postcard mailing that will cost several hundred dollars to ensure that everyone on our list is notified about licensing. So anything you can do to help offset our expenses is greatly appreciated. To join or donate, visit our website: <http://www.blmtb.org/> and click on "contact us" then "join/renew"

Appointments/Recommendations for the Board of Massage Therapy:

How to Apply for the Board of Massage Therapy or give a recommendation:

Contact Patti Keebler if you do not have internet access: 406-444-3862

Info on-line:

www.governor.mt.gov/boards_councils/default.asp

Questions: Contact Patti Keebler 406-444-3862 or pkeebler@mt.gov

Here are some things to keep in mind when applying for the board or making a recommendation:

- The Governor's office prefers web-based applications, but you can apply in a variety of ways: fax, email, on-line or US Mail
- You can also nominate people who you think would be good for the board. If you know a person who holds a license in another health care profession or a person who would make a good "public" member, recruit them. We want to be sure to get people on the board who would make good members.
- Everything and anything concerning an application for the board or a recommendation for a board member is public record. This means that anything submitted is available for the general public to review.
- By statute, boards are required to maintain gender and racial balance on the board. Also, while not required to do so, the Governor's office tries to balance the board to represent a broad spectrum of Montana - geographically (members from across the state, rather than one area) and generationally (even though they can't ask you your age).
- Board members receive \$50 per day for board meeting days and other board activity days, plus per diem (meals/lodging if required) and travel (mileage).
- Be sure to make your application as complete as possible. Since there are certain requirements for board members, be specific concerning: any national organizations you belong to, years of experience in the profession, and whether or not you own a school.

**Concerning the Massage Therapy Board, Board Meetings and Licensure:
Don't miss out! Sign up for more information.**

Sign up for the "Interested Parties List"

To ensure that you get information regarding licensure and board meetings, be sure to sign up with the state.

You are contacting the state of Montana to sign up (not the BLMTB or the AMTA)

Contact: Marilyn Kelly-Clark 406-841-2380 or mkelly-clark@mt.gov

Tell her you want to be added to the "Interested Parties List" for the Massage Therapy Board.

Leave your contact info: name, phone number, email address and street address.

We highly encourage you to sign up if you plan to be licensed. There is a firm date for applying for a grandfather license and we don't want anyone to miss out.

Board Meetings / Board Process:

- Board meetings are public and anyone may attend.
- If you cannot attend in person, you may listen in via phone. However, you must arrange this in advance, as there are limited phone lines on which to listen in.
- Meeting Minutes are posted on-line, but because the minutes have to be approved first, there may be a long lag time before the minutes are approved (at the next or a future board meeting) and posted. However, meetings are audiotaped. These tapes are only available from the time of the meeting until the minutes are approved and posted.
- There is time for public comment. However, if a topic is brought up and it is not already on the official agenda, the Board cannot legally discuss the topic at that time. If someone wants the board to discuss a topic, the item must be placed on the agenda ahead of time.
- Board members cannot discuss board business outside of meetings. Board members can decide at meetings what can and can't be talked about outside of board meetings with regard to information sharing. Since meetings are public record, this item is about board member behavior and is not about restricting information.
- The first meetings will include such topics as board member training, setting fees, developing applications, reviewing and approving the rules common to all boards and development of the unprofessional conduct rules applicable to the profession.
- Two attorneys are assigned to each board: one to advise and counsel the board and the other to prosecute complaints.

That's it for now. As we learn more, we will post that information!